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frequent rain. In sailing to Paraguay we were detained in that neighbourhood by a continuous calm, and remained stationary there for full three weeks, roasted by the heat of the sun, and daily washed with warm showers. Who can wonder that this languishing climate produces languid and weakly bodies, though strong robust people are found in other parts of Africa? From this you may know what to think of so extensive a region as America, and of its inhabitants. Its various provinces and even different parts of the provinces differ essentially in the properties of the air, food, and habitations, which produces a variety in the constitutions of the inhabitants, some being weak, some very strong.

Let others write of the other Americans to whom and what they choose: I shall not contradict them. Of the Paraguayrians I confidently affirm that the equestrian nations greatly excel the pedestrians in beauty of form, loftiness of stature, strength, health, and longevity. The bodies of the Abipones are muscular, robust, agile, and extremely tolerant of the inclemencies of the sky. You scarcely ever see a fat or pot-bellied person amongst them. Daily exercise in riding, hunting, and in sportive and serious contests prevents them almost always from growing fat, for like apes they are always in motion. They consequently enjoy such an

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excellent habit of body, and such sound health as most Europeans might envy. Many diseases which afflict and exhaust Europeans are not even known by name amongst them. Gout, dropsy, epilepsy, jaundice, stone, &c. are words foreign and monstrous to their ears. They expose their bare heads for whole days to the heat of the sun, and yet you never hear one of them complain of head-ache. You would swear they were devoid of feeling, or made of brass or marble; yet even these grow hot when acted on by the rays of the sun. After having been long parched with thirst in dry deserts, they drink large draughts of marshy, salt, muddy, stinking, bitter water, without injury. They greedily swallow quantities of hard, half-roasted beef, venison, tiger's and emu's flesh, and the eggs of the latter, without experiencing any consequent langour of the stomach, or difficulty of digestion. They often swim across vast rivers in cold rainy weather without contracting any ill affection of the bowels or bladder, which was often troublesome to the Europeans in swimming, and, if succeeded by strangury, dangerous. They ride seated on saddles made of hard leather during journeys of many weeks, and yet such long sitting does not injure the external skin even. They are unprovided with stirrups, and often use trotting horses, yet after many hours of uninterrupted

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147 [193] riding you can perceive no signs of fatigue or exhaustion in any of them. Stretched on a cold
● [164] turf, should a sudden shower descend, they pass the night swimming in water, yet never know what the colic or the gout is. The Spaniards run the risk of both after being long drenched with rain water, which, when it touches the skin, affects the body most terribly in America, often producing syncope, and sometimes pustules and ulcers. I have frequently seen Spanish soldiers faint in the church from having been wetted with rain on their way thither. The Abi-
147 [291] pones pass many days and nights amid constant rain uninjured, because their feet are bare; for the moisture contracted from rain hurts the feet when they are wrapt up more than when they are uncovered; as, finding no vent when it exhales, it creeps inwards, penetrates the bones and nerves, and affects the rest of the body in a terrible manner. But I can give you further proof of the strength of the Abiponcs.

If a thorn of any plant happens to stick in their foot, and to break there, so that it cannot be dullad out by the finger, they will coolly cut the little piece of flesh, to which the thorn adheres, with a knife. When they go out to [193] act the part of spies, or to reconnoitre distant places, they sit with both feet upon the horse's back. They climb high trees, and sit quietly

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147 304 866 parents, and display plenty of wounds, indications of courage superior to their years, and preludes of war, for which they are educated from earliest infancy.

758 Persons wasted to a skeleton, and with every symptom of fever and consumption, we have seen restored to health by daily eating and drinking the alfaroba. When seized with a violent disorder, or dangerously wounded, they recover by the use of this easily obtained remedy, or, like dogs, without any at all. I have often with horror beheld many of them wounded with various kinds of weapons, their side pierced, their bones and ribs broken, their breath drawn with difficulty, the blood streaming from their numerous wounds; themselves, in short, the breathing images of death. When I saw these very Abipones a few weeks afterwards, riding or drinking, in full health, I could attribute it to nothing but the strength of their constitutions; for it certainly could not be owing to their unskilful physicians and inefficacious medicines. Every one knows that small-pox and measles are almost the only, and by far the most calamitous pest by which America is exhausted. The Abipones take the infection like the other Indians, but seldom fall victims to the disease, though, whilst under its influence, they are less careful of themselves than the

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other natives. Owing to the more healthy temperature of their blood and humours, it does not cause either so much, or such noxious matter in them as it does in others. Of the small-pox I shall discourse more fully hereafter. They live and enjoy their health many years after they have been wounded with leaden bullets without ever suffering them to be extracted: as a proof of their strength they often showed us a bullet sticking, without injury, in their arm or foot, and offered it us to handle. It is still more remarkable that a musket ball seldom proves fatal to the Abipones, unless it strike the heart or the head: their Cacique, the renowned Kaapetraikin, received a ball of this kind into his forehead without any dangerous consequences. Considering these things I often wondered why the savages dreaded fire-arms so much, since they very rarely proved fatal to them. But as children are afraid of ignes fatui, though harmless; in like manner the Indians fear the report more than the ball, which they so often find to miss of its aim, and prove formidable to the air alone. These instances will, if I mistake not, do something towards convincing Europeans of the strength of the Abipones. Neither shall I ever be a convert to the opinion that the Americans are possessed of a duller and less acute sense of

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tainly cannot boast of their beauty: for the 231
Indian dogs have no elegance of form, they are generally middle-sized, and of various colours, as with us. They are neither so small as the dogs of Malta and Bologna, nor so large as mastiffs. You never see any of those shaggy curly dogs, which are so fond of the water, and so docile, except amongst the Spaniards, who have them sent over in European ships. But though the Indian dogs do not excel in beauty, they are by no means inferior to those of Europe in quickness of scent, in activity, vigilance, and sincere affection for their masters. In every Abiponian colony, some hundred dogs keep continual watch, and by the terrible howling and barking which they nightly utter in chorus, at the slightest motion, perpetually disturbed our sleep, but never secured us from being surprized by the enemy; a troop of whom would often steal into the colony, whilst the whole of the dogs maintained a profound silence. Yet none of the Abipones ever blamed them, foolishly imagining them bewitched by the magic arts of the enemy's jugglers. It may be reckoned amongst the blessings of Paraguay, that it is unacquainted with madness in dogs, or any kind of cattle, and that hydrophobia is unknown here. This must be accounted a singular benefit of Providence, and one of the wonders of nature

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CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE DISEASES, PHYSICIANS, AND MEDICINES OF THE ABIPONES.

I HAVE long since described the Abipones to be stout, vigorous, and robust; and unless I am much deceived, have already proved in chapter the seventh, that the diseases, which in Europe fill houses with sick persons, and graves with dead bodies, are unknown here. Epilepsy, gout, lethargy, madness, jaundice, diseases in the joints, complaints in the kidneys, elephantiasis, iliac disorders, &c. are names strange and foreign to the Abipones. You scarce hear once in three years of any of them dying of a fever, pleurisy, or consumption. Sickness is more rare amongst them than an Aurora Borealis, or an eclipse with us. I never heard any of them complain of tooth-ache except an old woman, who soon stopped the pain with a few drops of vinegar. I do not wonder that the savages should be exempt from so common a complaint, as they are accustomed from childhood to chew tobacco leaves mixed with salt and the saliva of old women, and reduced into the form of an unguent. It is not improperly, therefore, that

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827 replies with a groan, it is in my heart: so that it is very difficult to understand from the Indians what their complaint is, and where it is situated, unless it be betrayed by other signs. Loathing
753 of food for ever so short a time is, in their
827 opinion, a certain indication of sickness. If an Abipon, from having overloaded his stomach, abstains from food for a little while, the women immediately augur the worst respecting him, and make no end of their lamentations, saying every now and then with a groan, *Chik rkeñe*, he does not eat. As soon as the sick person takes ever so little food, though the disorder be not yet subdued, they think him out of danger, so that *Là rkeñe*, he eats now; and *Là-yumini*, or *Là natattuge*, now he is recovered, now he revives, are with them synonimous.
•[164] Moreover, as the Abipones are but very seldom
165 sick, so very few of them die when they are sick. I do not doubt but that in the frequent conflicts they have with enemies and tigers, numbers fall yearly by the nails of the one, and the claws of the other. In most of the remainder, extreme old age is generally the fatal dis-
[165] ease. In a word, greatest part of the Abi-
761 pones die when they are satiated with life, when, weary of the burden of years, they long for death as the rest and solace of their miserable existence. This circumstance occasions

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trickling from the nostrils were symptoms of the reigning disorder; the same signs too indicated the bites of serpents in animals. Mutilating the ear, and cutting the vein of the fore foot, were admirable remedies against the poison of that disease in mules, especially if salt were given them to lick. The paunches of the oxen slain to feed the Indians are daily thrown out, along with the bowels, into an open place, where all the horses and mules eagerly crowd to lick the garbage, because a sort of salt and nitre is created by the blood of which they are excessively fond. Therefore, whilst this dreadful murrain raged in our territories we daily sprinkled those entrails with salt, the salubrity of which is proved by the circumstance, that whilst numbers died in the neighbouring estates, very few sickened, and many recovered with us in the town of St. Joachim.

It is beyond all controversy, that small-pox is the true plague of the Americans, and that it has been lately introduced into America, either by Europeans or Negroes. Hence the just complaint of the Indians. "The Europeans are fine people, truly! They have made liberal compensation for the infinity of gold and silver they have taken from us, by leaving us the plague of the small-pox." Indeed it is a well known fact that the number of Indians who have died of this

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GUARANI 514

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164 disease during the two last centuries, defy all
G calculation. In the thirty Guarany towns some
[165] thirty thousand persons died of the small-pox
in the year 1734.

ooo It is not true that the Spaniards and other Europeans in America are exempted from small-pox; but it cannot be doubted that the Indians take it sooner, and more frequently die of it. I am of opinion that their habit of body has less strength to repel or overcome that poison. They generally eat half-raw and unsalted meat; they always go with their heads and feet bare; they drink nothing but water, and that not of the best kind, except at a few festive drinking parties in the course of the year; all which tend to weaken the stomach. The heat of the sun, and the constant use of maize, cause a ferment in their blood which, on the accession of small-pox, very frequently proves fatal. This must be understood of the pedestrian Indians only, for the Abipones, and other equestrian Indians, who do not labour under those miseries to which the pedestrians are subject, generally have the small-pox in a milder form.

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G In the year 1765 this plague carried off great
A numbers in the Spanish colonies. Having swept
731 away about twelve thousand persons in the thirty
165 Guarany towns, it spread to the distant hordes
164 of the savages scattered throughout Chaco, and

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though almost all took the infection, yet few died in proportion to the number of the sick. I speak of the equestrians, who were saved by the strength of their constitutions. In the town which I founded for the Abipones, one woman only escaped the contagion, yet out of the many hundreds that took the disease, twenty alone fell victims to it.

Often no mention is made of the small-pox for many years amongst the Indians; but this calm is the sure forerunner of an approaching storm. We have always found the small pox break out first in the colonies of the Spaniards, and spread from thence to the farthest hordes of the Indians; who, having learnt from the experience of their ancestors, to dread this disease as their death, separate from their hordesmen as soon as ever they have the least suspicion of its approach, and fly, some one way, some another, in precipitate haste. Upon this occasion they travel not in a straight line, but by various meanders and windings. That this method is superstitiously observed by the Lules, Isistines, Vilelas, Homoampas, and Chunipies, I was told by Fathers who had resided long amongst them. Through fear of the contagion, fathers desert their sick sons, and sons their fathers. They leave a pitcher of water, and some roasted maize at the sick

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man's bed, and consult their own safety by flight. I should wrong the Abipones were I to say that they imitate them in these particulars. They do indeed turn their backs on the spot where the pestilence prevails, and crowd to their lurking-places in the woods; but on these occasions, they travel straight onwards, as usual, nor ever neglect their sick friends and relations, studiously performing the duties of humanity. Their endurance of pain and inconvenience at such times is likewise deserving of commendation. Even whilst the disorder rages with malignant heats I never heard them womanishly crying or complaining. They account the least groan a dishonour, and, to maintain the character for fortitude, endeavour to endure the bitterness of disease in silence.

I generally found this disorder most fatal to persons of a melancholy, choleric habit, or of advanced age, and to women in a state of pregnancy. To those upon whom, after a feverish heat, the small-pox slowly broke out, in whom it was blackish, thick, depressed, and spotted in the middle, or mixed with red and confluent, I presaged great danger and speedy death; —a prediction generally verified by the event. When the small-pox and swelling quickly disappear, all hope of the patient's recovery disappears likewise. I generally observed that per-

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of Spaniards he had slain. Here it may be observed that the Americans, who have had the genuine small-pox, do not fear the return of it. At five years of age I had the small-pox so slightly, that I was marked in ten places only, and was ill but two days. Yet that this short sickness is, by the law of nature, sufficient, I was fully persuaded, after living many months, day and night, with Indians who had the disorder, without taking the infection.

Almost the same observations may be made on measles as on small-pox. It rages at intervals, spreads, and cuts off vast numbers in America. Whilst I resided in the town of St. Joachim, out of two thousand Indians so many were laid up with this disorder, that often none were left to supply the sick with food, water, wood and medicines. The offices due to the minds and bodies of the sick kept Father Joseph Fleischauer and myself occupied day and night for some months. That pestilence carried off two hundred persons, out of which number there were very few infants, and no old men, most of them being persons in the flower of their age. The tertian ague sometimes spreads like a contagion amongst the Indians, but is more troublesome than dangerous, and prevails only in those places where stinking ditch water is in constant use. For the same reason ter-

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164 tian ague is very prevalent in many Spanish towns, especially in Tucuman. In the colony of Concepcion, on the banks of the river Ines-pin, which supplied the inhabitants with sweet and very wholesome water, no person was ever seized with the tertian ague. In the colonies of St. Ferdinand and the Rosary, which were surrounded with marshes and lakes, the Abipones were destitute of river water, and consequently hardly ever free from agues. In the colony of the Rosary the fever prevailed so much for the space of some months, that no one escaped it, not even myself, though at other times secure amidst persons infected with this disorder. That none of the savages might die suddenly without receiving baptism, I daily visited all the sick, and at length caught the quotidian ague, though the Indians only laboured under the tertian. The fever daily increased at sun-set, and did not leave me till morning. This feverish agitation, at the end of seven and twenty days, was succeeded by the tertian, after two fits of which I happily recovered. What I suffered, in my utter want of all necessaries, and what danger I underwent, need not be told here.

Just as I am about to conclude my discourse on contagious disorders, a circumstance occurs to my mind worthy the critical examination of